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Magic Apprentice - Chapter 01

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Shining through the dense forest, the harsh sunlight was scattered all over the ground.

There was the mixed scent of moss and decayed trees with dragon-like roots scattered everywhere across the stones. Amongst the rubble and tree roots, four people were slowly advancing forwards. The person at front seemed to be the oldest, but was not of age just yet. The other three behind the person in front were all children, but no matter how much one looked at this group, they seemed as if they were all out on an excursion. But this “Forest of Illusions” was no place to be out on an excursion for. The eldest child up front held a chopper in his hands and cut a path through the shrubbery and vines in his way with the boy in the back holding all of the luggage on his back. In between, the male and female seemed to be walking around in relaxation.

“Seems like finding a place to set up camp before the sun sets isn’t as easy as we thought.”

“Jerry, climb up the trees and see if there’s any clearing nearby.” Kite commanded the empty-handed male.

Kite was the leader of the group, or so he’d like to think so.

“Me again?” Jerry grumbled. Although it seemed as if he was extremely reluctant to go up, he was actually quite proud of himself. After all, he was the only one in the group to know flying techniques.

“Spirit that holds dominion over the air, listen to my prayer. Obey my contract with the Wind God and release me from the shackles of the earth.”

Following the incantation of the spell, Jerry slowly began to rise up into the air towards the treetops before quickly disappearing into the foliage.

“About 2.5 kilometers southeast of here, there’s a hill.” Jerry’s voice could be heard from the top, “I’ll go take a look.”

“Going on a stroll by himself again!”

“He’s relying on his ability to fly too much.”

“I’ll smash his head in when he gets back.”

“Feed him raw meat later tonight!”

“Let him be tonight’s watch!”

“.....”

By trial in absentia, the rest of the indignant members had already determined Jerry to be guilty. Poor Jerry.

After two hours, the group had finally arrived at the hill. The road had been truly a difficult one, by the time they had arrived, the sun had already set even.

Before the daylight is gone, any traveler had to have their tents set up already and have a campfire up and have plenty of fuel ready. Naturally, the remaining three jurors of a group hadn’t wanted to do any work themselves and forced their one prisoner to do all of the hard work in hopes of a lighter sentence. This was the most basics of rights in civilized society when it came to dealing with a prisoner.

“I’m beat! My legs are killing me!”

“Belladonna, how can you say you’re the one tired? You weren’t the one finding the path, or the one leading the way, or even the one carrying the luggage!” Jerry protested.

“Hurry up and do your tasks, stop talking.”

“Belladonna, could you act a little more ladylike now please?”

“And who should this lady be?”

“These two still have the energy to quarrel, it seems that their burdens are too light.” Kite spoke to Unluck quietly.

The latter had nodded his head in agreement.

Nightfell. There was a campfire in front of the tents, and the firewood was naturally gathered by Jerry. The task of lighting the campfire had been left to Kate to do since he was studying fire based magic. To him, casting a small fireball

or whatever was of no difficulty to him. At the same time, Belladonna was preparing the mountain pheasant Jerry had caught.

Observing the smoking bonfire, Unluck's thoughts began to drift away back to his home.

His home was Savana, a small town located upstream the Tosli River. While it was small, because it was right next to the second major city, Sina City, his town had flourished. His father had owned a grocery store in this town. When he was young, his father would oftentimes call Unluck to come help with some customers or ring the bill up, cutting his time to play into nothing. Every single time this happened, his father would turn to him and say, "My son, in the future, I hope to pass down this store onto you." As a result, he had grown up with a dream to open a grocery store in Sina City. He would usually see the merchants come from Sina City into Savana on rich looking carriages, which had motivated him. From his town, these merchants would change out their horses for camels. It was a favorite pastime of Unluck to listen to these merchants talk about the affairs in Sina City. For example, the recent construction of the central theater, or the majestic carnival celebration. But since he had never left Savana in his entire life until he had met his master.

His master was called Victor, a mage. Before his arrival, Savana had no mages. So when Victor had come to Savana, the inhabitants had been overjoyed, for they finally had a mage. But not too long after, the excitement had faded. The reason for this was because this teacher was not like the regular mage. Or perhaps it was better to say he didn't give the feeling of being a mage. His master was lascivious and a heavy drinker, unlike the steadfast monk-like mages who swore off alcohol. Because a mage had to hone their mind and spirit when casting an incantation, they were always serious, and self-regulated their lives quite stringently. But Victor being a horny drunkard had not been his biggest shortcoming. His biggest fault was actually due to his magic being very bad. His control over his magic was horrendous—if he didn't go overboard, he didn't use enough magic. Sometimes, the spell wouldn't even work. Ever since he had caused a series of disasters for the town, no one had the gall to request for any type of magical help from him. Some of the richer families in the town had originally planned on using him to get to know several other mages to open up a

connection to the Mage Association, but they soon gave up on that idea. There had been rumors saying that Victor had a bad reputation however. Like embezzling the funds of the association, or seducing the wife of his employer, or stealing a statue of a church, or exploiting his status as a mage to cheat a girl, or...in any case, there was one more malicious thing that Unluck was clear on—Victor did not pay back debts easily.

In the end, Unluck's parents were at their wits end when Victor came to their grocery store to purchase some things, (with credit, of course), and then began to talk about the matter of payment. After arguing for half the day, Victor had realized that the father would not budge and begrudgingly asked to put half the bill on credit, and the other half would be paid off by the next month's allowance from the Mage Association. When Unluck's father had agreed and turned to get their account book, Victor had seized the chance to walk up to Unluck and beamed at him, "Little boy, would you like to learn magic?"

"Yes." Came the unhesitating answer from Unluck.

"Very well, I will now accept you as my student." His master had suddenly declared.

And thus, Unluck had become the only disciple of Victor. Naturally, the bill he owed was written off, and in the future whenever he had an errand for Unluck's father, he would send Unluck. After many years since, Unluck's father was still ever so shocked on why Victor was a magician and not a merchant—he certainly had the aptitude to be an unscrupulous merchant.

Ever since then, Unluck would come by his master's place early in the morning to clean up, and every night at a specific time, he would drag his master back home from the tavern. Sometimes, he would run an errand (Most of the time back to his own grocery store for a few things. It was fortunate that his master would only ask him to bring the necessities rather than the more pricy things), but he had his free time as well. Normally, his master wouldn't even get up from bed until the sun had set. At times, Unluck had truly thought, "*Does this guy have a lineage of vampires or something?*". The majority of the time, his master would pull himself out of bed to go to uncle Todd's tavern to drink. Uncle Todd was the only other person aside from Unluck's father that was willing to sell to his master. However, the difference between uncle Todd and his father was that

Todd seemed to have taken a liking to his master and had never asked his master to pay his debts. Before Unluck had become Victor's disciple, Victor would often times sleep over at Todd's tavern. It was only natural that he had the experience of falling asleep on the road as well. But now every evening, Unluck would come bring his master home. In the beginning, Unluck would be puked on by his master, and so Unluck went from carrying him to dragging him. If he puked, he'd puked on himself. Victor's way of teaching magic had been independent study mainly—he had never taught Unlucky any type of magic. Instead, he had only thrown the books at Unluck before telling him to memorize the incantations and meditate.

Soon, Unluck had memorized the incantations inside out and had more or less understood the meditation methods. He had even experimented a few times, but no matter what he did, he was unable to cast any spells.

Finally, one time his master had been sober for once when Unluck had asked him about a problem with using magic. The answer had been heart-stomping. As things turned out, Unluck was not suited to learning magic in the first place. That was because in this world, the majority of the magics used by mages relied upon the mage using spiritual power to gather magic and control the elements in a way to bring it out. The stronger the spiritual power, the faster the magical elements would be gathered. Their connection to the elements would be greater, and their control over it would be even more accurate. For that reason, there were Trainee Mages, Lesser, Middle, and Greater Mages, Magus, and Magisters. There were two types of people unsuited to learning magic. The first type of people were those with weak spiritual power. The majority of people belonged in this category, and for that reason, mages were quite rare. The other scenario was that some people had even stronger spiritual power, but their divergent nature made it hard for them to concentrate. While they could gather the magical elements, they were incapable of preserving the gathered magical elements together. Unluck belonged in this later category.

KNOWing this reason, Unluck hadn't been too distressed. All in all, his original desire was to become the boss of a grocery store, so not being able to learn magic hadn't been an end all blow to his life. However, Unluck did not divulge this secret of being unable to learn magic to his father and continued to practice

meditation despite it being useless to him in order to preserve his tranquil lifestyle.

Although his master wouldn't wake up early often, what had left an impression on Unluck was that every month, there would be a day where his master would freshen himself up. He wouldn't even drink wine. That day was the gathering of the Mage Association. At the same time, his master would be able to receive the monthly allowance from the Mage Association. As per usual, his master would walk up to the library on the second floor where his portal was to be happily transported to the Mage Association. But this time had been different, before it was even noon, his master had came back. Whatever was it that had caused him to abandon the Mage Association's gathering meal? The kingdom would usually take out some money from their funds to prepare and conduct a grand banquet for the mages in their honor. That had been one of the reasons why his master had looked forward to the gathering.

"Master, why have you returned so early, was the banquet canceled?" Unluck had asked in curiosity.

"Quickly now, clean up and come with me." His master had given a brief order.

"But...."

"Don't dawdle. Whatever you want to know, you can ask later on the road. Hurry up and pack."

"How many days will we be gone?"

"Don't know, prepare enough for a while. Hurry up now."

At his master's urging, Unluck had ran out the door through the streets to get back home.

Seeing his son come running home in a hurry, Unluck's father had instantly left his customer to greet his son.

"What happened?" His father had asked with worry. Ever since his son had began to follow that scoundrel of a mage, he had always worried that something would happen one day.

"Oh....no, dad... don't worry....I'm fine....I'm just here to gather a few things.

Master is going to take me somewhere.” Unluck hadn’t even waited for his breath to come back before answering so as to put off his father’s concern.

“Where are you going?” His father asked.

“I don’t know. Master didn’t say where or how long. He only told me to prepare adequately.” Unluck had told his father all that he knew, but he himself didn’t know much in the first place either. After finishing up his words, Unluck had begun to mind his own business and start to pack.

Seeing that there was nothing else he could ask, his father could only help his son pack up. It had been fortunate that Savana received many travelers, so the grocery had many essentials for traveling and supplies. It didn’t even take long before they had gathered all that they needed.

Carrying his luggage out, Unluck didn’t have much, but it was enough to deal with the most common of traveling problems such as traveling through the desert or deep in the mountains. Unluck had never traveled before, but after helping his father with the store for so long, he had talked with many travelers before. So at the very least, he was a specialist in picking out the right supplies for a traveling trip. Unluck stood by the doorway to the store and put down his luggage. Turning around, he bade farewell to his father. Seeing his son, Unluck’s father suddenly had the feeling that his son would be forever leaving him and the store. The son in front of him had always been a traveler at heart. The world of a grocery store was simply not enough to hold him down.

Picking up his luggage, Unluck ran back to his master’s laboratory.

“Lock the doors and come up to the second floor.” His master’s voice called out from the floor above.

With an apprehensive heart, Unluck walked up to the laboratory on the second floor.

There was a transportation magical array on the second floor with five disks made from bronze in the center.

Master Victor was sitting on one of the disks. Pointing at the one to his side, he waved Unluck over, “Come here and sit down.”

Like his master, Unluck sat down. In the instant he had sat down, an

otherworldly sensation suddenly arose in him. His surroundings seemed to have gone still for that moment before countless of images came flying past him. Ocean, desert, alpines, forest, city, and wastelands. Unluck had seemed like he was flying through all of the many different sceneries, the colors began to blur and the images began to distort. From sunset to sunrise, from icy mountains to glaciers....

Unluck didn't know how much time had passed before the illusions had cleared away from his mind.

"How do you feel now?" His master had been watching him attentively. From the very moment Unluck had awoken, his master asked straight away.

"I'm sorry, I let the Dreamland overtake me." Unluck had spoken up in embarrassment.

"That wasn't the Dreamland. The sceneries in this image are certain spots in the world. What you saw are the memories of the magical array." When his master saw the distinct look of bewilderment on his pupil's face, he continued to explain, "This magical array has gone to every single area in the world. Each area only adds to its memory....Some people take these images to be illusions and dismiss them. Some people take these images to be a method of communication with it...."

Seeing Unluck at a complete loss of words at trying to understand this, Victor hurriedly snapped his student back to his senses, "Don't think too much about it. We've already wasted enough time, prepare to set out!"

Hearing his master telling him about a method of meditation, Unluck immediately closed his eyes in accordance to adjust his mind. Seeing his student begin to calm down, Victor sat back down and began to make several hand signs with his hands and chant out loud, "Fei-So-Fei-Fa-Fa-So-Fei-Fa-Ka-Na-Da"

After a sudden tremor had passed, Unluck had felt another wave of tremors hit him over the head straight after.

"We're here." He heard his master say. Opening his eyes, Unluck could only see themselves standing on a platform. As he stood up, he looked around himself. The platform was made from white marble into a circular fashion. A hundred meters away on both ends of the platform, a giant magical array could be seen.

It was many times larger than the one back in the laboratory, but these two magical arrays were completely different to it.

“Quick, pull me up!” The forgotten teach had sputtered angrily.

It was then that Unluck had suddenly remembered his poor master Victor. Half-pulling and half-dragging his teacher, Unluck managed to pick him up. After tidying up the luggage, he hurriedly began to follow after his master.

On the road, the two began to talk as they walked with Victory explaining some things to Unluck.

Originally, when a mage took in a disciple, the Mage Association had stipulated that the mage would have to have the disciple registered with the association. A year later, the association would have an examination ready. After passing the examination, the disciple would be granted an apprenticeship, formally registered with the Mage Association and would be allowed to learn magic. However, if they did not pass the examination on the second year, then their apprenticeship would be canceled.

Last year, mage Victor had signed Unluck up to take the examination without his permission. This year would be the year that he would have to personally come take the examination.

“You have two paths you can walk on right now. The first, you give up on this exam and return back to your father’s grocery store. The second, you take the exam and return back to your grocery store after failing it.” Victor spoke. It seemed that he didn’t wasn’t very optimistic about his own student.

“....I wish to take the examination....”

Hearing his own student speak, Victor didn’t feel anything was unexpected. After spending two years with him, he had a good understanding of the nature of his student.

As they spoke, the two finally reached the Mage Association.

They walked through a circular archway. Victor took Unluck through into a long assembly hall where three people could be seen seated already.

“You should stay here for a spell, go acquaint yourself with your fellow

comrades in the exam. If there's anything you don't know, you can ask them." As he finished, Victor left Unluck and walked away.

In such an unfamiliar setting, this was the very first time Unluck had felt a rather lonely emotion. He didn't know just how he would be able to make talk with a random stranger.

After a small period of silence, the eldest of the three took the initiative to walk on over, "Hello, I'm Kite." he extended his right hand. Reflexively, Unluck stuck out his own right hand to shake it, "I-I'm Unluck. Nice to meet you."

With the silence broken, the atmosphere had grown far more lively. After the self-introduction, the others came forward to introduce themselves.

Kite, Jerry, and Belladonna were now all acquainted with Unluck. Kite was 18 years old this year, and was the disciple of Sina City's director general of the Mage Association, Collins. He specialized in fire based magic.

Jerry and Belladonna were both the same year as Unluck at 16 years old. Jerry was the disciple of Mage Pierrot and specialized in wind based magic.

Belladonna was the disciple of Greater Mage Bellissa. Her focus was in water based magic.

Out of the three, Kite was born into a family of Knights with lordships. However, his orthodox knight training had been completely different from the other nobles. He hadn't that overbearing attitude that many of the other nobles had.

Belladonna's parents were clergies, as a result, she had an education into the divine since childhood. Originally, her parents had wanted her to take up a holy related occupation. But because Belladonna herself had wished to follow in the footsteps of her maternal aunt Bellissa who was a Greater Mage, she had decided to choose the path of the Mage.

Jerry was the son of a rich merchant. His parents had wanted their family to one day obtain the title of being a noble, and so they had made sure their three sons would be sent into the best educational establishment to further their careers. The eldest had joined the Imperial Knights. Jerry was the second son, and he still had a younger brother who was currently undertaking training to

become a clergy.

In comparison, Unluck being the son of a grocery store owner was quite a wretched status. But Unluck hadn't treated this to be a disgrace. In fact, he had even made mention of the fact that he had a physique that was unsuitable to learning magic.

Upon hearing that Unluck was still taking the examination despite not being able to wield magic in the slightest, Kite couldn't help but respect such a character. Without any further words, the two had already become good friends.

With all of the enthusiastic chatter, the time had quickly gone by. Soon, the halls opened up to reveal a trainee mage.

"Are you the examinees waiting to take the exam?" The mage spoke.

"Yes." Kite spoke up as the representative of the four.

"You will first fill out several forms and then head to your area of residence to put down your luggage. Afterwards, you will all attend the banquet." After he spoke, the mage handed out several forms and then a pencil.

With the help of Kite, Unluck had managed to fill out the forms with some difficulty.

Taking in the four completed forms, the proctor began to tidy them up before leading them out. Unluck and the others had to carry their own luggage and follow from behind.

After reaching the residence, the three males were given a shared room while Belladonna was by herself.

After assigning themselves a bed, everyone threw down their luggage and followed the trainee mage back out to the banquet.

Upon entering the banquet hall, everyone had felt the atmosphere to be rather noisy and warm.

Seeing the large crowd, Kite spoke, "We should walk together so we won't get lost. It'd be extremely difficult to locate anyone in here."

The other three nodded in agreement.

“Let’s first go eat then!” Jerry suggested.

“Fine.” For Unluck who had only ate breakfast and skipped over lunch, this suggestion was more than enough to stir his stomach.

With difficulty, the four had managed to squeeze themselves onto a dinner table. Unexpectedly, there had been very few people here. But most eye-catching was teacher Victor eating by himself with wide open chews. Seeing his table manners, it wasn’t hard for the four to deduce why there had been so few people near the dinner table.

Seeing this clown, the other three couldn’t help but feel some pity for Unluck.

Just then, Victor raised his head up to look at Unluck and the others. With a wave of his hand, Victor beckoned to Unluck.

“He’s calling us over.” Unluck explained.

“You can go.”

“Kill me now, I’m not going.”

“We don’t know him.”

The other three spoke up in unision.

Taking this with a heavy skin, Unluck turned to walk towards Victor.

“Master, what is wrong?” Unluck asked.

“Oh,” Victor swallowed a piece of a chicken drumstick before quickly biting into a piece of fried fish. With a muffled voice, he spoke, “You’ve been starving the entire day. Hurry up and eat. Tomorrow morning, head to the starting point a little earlier, I have something to say to you.”

With that, he thrust a pork leg onto Unluck’s hands.

“I’m not hungry.”

“Not hungry? Impossible.” Victor spoke with doubt.

“Oh, right! I’ve become good friends with my fellow exam takers. I wish to spend a little more time with them.” Unluck hurriedly spoke up. Then, before Victor could say any more, he ran towards his companions.

“Hurry, let’s go now.” Belladonna urged.

The group of four quickly made their way into the small flower garden where all was quiet. In there, Unluck split the pork leg amongst the four of them. A single pork leg wasn’t nearly enough to feed the four young stomachs. But, to remain at the dinner table and take some more food required far more courage than any one of them currently had.

Fortunately, there had been a waiter with a platter of snacks and drinks. Just barely, the four of them had managed to fill their stomachs by a small amount.

Then, two magnificent robe wearing mages came walking on over to them.

“Master,” “Aunty,” Jerry and Belladonna stood up in a hurry.

It appeared that these two mages were the Mage Pierrot and the Greater Mage Bellissa. Due to etiquette, Kite and Unluck stood up as well.

When the Greater Mage Bellissa saw Belladonna come forward, she took her by the shoulder and spoke, “Didn’t you work hard today? You must be starving! Why haven’t you gotten anything to eat?”

“I don’t have the courage to go fight with the hungry dragon for his territory.” Still hungry, Belladonna had angrily vented away. She had completely disregarded the fact that the disciple of this “hungry dragon” was feeling quite embarrassed.

“Hahaha, hungry dragon—what an apt comparison.” Bellissa gave a happy laugh. This type of laughter had made Unluck feel that the Greater Mage Bellissa didn’t have the best of relationships with his master.

“Cough, cough.” The Mage Pierrot gave two short coughs to garner attention. As if holding back a pained expression, he spoke, “Let’s not be so impolite. Magus Victor is an extremely powerful Magus.”

“Ma-Mag-Magus??” To be truthful, Unluck had never felt so much shock before. Seeing the look of befuddlement on his companion’s faces, he knew that they were all thinking of the same thing: *“This guy, to think that he was somehow connected to a respected and venerated Magus.”*

Still in a tizzy, Jerry and Belladonna were taken away by their masters to god

knows where. Only Kite remained by Unluck's side.

"We should head to bed first!" Kite suggested. Originally, Mages Bellissa and Pierrot had both wanted to bring Kite to where his master had been. But Kite had declined their goodwill. If Unluck were to be left alone in this place, with his current mental state, there would be no way for him to find his way back.

"We're going, then!" The still in mute shock Unluck hadn't any energy to reply to him.

With great difficulty, the two had managed to drag themselves back to their residence. On the door was a single piece of paper tacked to it with the words, "Tomorrow, 5:00 AM. Gather at the gates." written on it. Opening up the door to get to their beds, Unluck's head dropped onto his bed. After such a heavy shock, he had felt powerless. It seemed that a great turmoil of emotions was truly damaging to one's health.

"Hey, feeling better yet?" Kite asked in concern.

Unluck turned his body over and faced the ceiling, "I'm fine, just shocked really. Too shocked I'll add. My entire body feels weak."

Seeing that Unluck was fine, Kite had turned to face his ceiling on his bed like Unluck had done. Looking at it, he spoke, "In your opinion, just how do you see your master?"

"A lecherous, drunk and lazy rogue that is incapable of being a mage." A series of dark and rather insulting words streamed out from Unluck's mouth.

"You forgot voracious and shameless." Kite quipped. He had still the terrifying image of Magus Victor with fat dribbling down his mouth.

"He must have some sort of strong point. What branch of magic does your teacher specialize in?" Kite persisted.

"Master has always been a drunkard. I've never seen him complete any type of magic." Unluck had furiously wracked his brain for a memory to see if there had been any deep acts of magic his master had ever done.

But as he thought, Unluck had somehow fell asleep.

When the time came for him to wake, he realized that it was still quite early. It

was still dark outside.

He didn't know if it was because he had crashed early due to the shock he had felt towards his master's identity, or because of his nerves due to the examination later today. In any other case, Unluck was unable to fall back asleep. Getting up, he opened the door to his room and gently closed the door to the best of his ability.

There was no one in the hall when Unluck had walked through it.

Unluck strolled through the Mage Association by himself in solitude. The majority of the doors were locked, and many of the rooms were dimly lit. The stars in the sky were beginning to wane, and Venus was already started to shine from the east.

Walking to the center of the room, Unluck waited for the sun to rise up from the east.

The sky gradually grew brighter and chased away the darkness with its morning light. Although the western skies still had some visible starlight, the eastern skies were beginning to whiten.

"What an early riser!" A voice suddenly called out from behind, scaring Unluck into jumping up. Turning back, a single frail but serious looking mage came walking towards him.

"To think, there would be someone early enough to watch the sunrise." The old mage spoke.

"I've heard many travelers say that the sunrise of any place is one of the most treasured sights in the world." Unluck spoke before quickly adding on, "So, I came here to personally witness it myself."

"Is this your first time traveling? You must be Victor's student then!" Unluck was surprised to see this older mage's analytical and judgemental ability.

"How did you know?" Unluck asked carefully.

"My student will be taking the examination for the first time as well." The mage spoke.

Unluck immediately realized that the old man in front of him was Kite's

master—Director general of the Sina City’s Mage Association, Magus Collins.

“Your physique doesn’t seem too apt to be learning magic!” Worthy of being called the chief mage of the Sina City’s Mage Association, Collins had been able to see through him at a glance, “Did Victor not tell you?”

“Master has told me already. But despite being unable to use magic, I still wish to understand even a little bit more about magic. Until now, the knowledge of magic was something that only mages could talk about, commoners had been unable to use or even learn magic.” Unluck had felt that this wise mage in front of him was more than capable of understanding the emotions he had repressed in his own mind, so he spoke up confidently, “So. If magic is so capable of being received by the mass, a great and powerful Magus like you must have some sort of method or way!”

Collins’ eyes stared at the young kid in front of him. In his eyes, a restless and suspicious look could be seen. But along these two emotions, consideration was mixed in.

After Unluck had finished saying his first bit, the esteemed Magus had something to say before, but after hearing the rest, Collins hadn’t replied. Unluck’s heart had grown restless as a result. That was because there had still been one more thing he didn’t say to Collins—even now, Unluck had doubted even his own words—he had instinctively used these words as an excuse to leave the comforts of his familiar and comfortable little grocery store.

“The sun has already risen. It’s unfortunate, but you’ve missed it.” Collins had suddenly changed the topic.

Unluck hurriedly turned around, only to be greeted with the giant wheel of fire that was the sun already rising high into the air. “Ah, how amazing! It’s a shame I missed the sunrise. Just when did it come rising out?”

Collins stared at Unluck’s back for a moment before saying significantly, “When your back was turned, the sun had just started to rise.”

As Unluck immersed himself in the magic that was the sunrise, Collins had quietly left the area.

Returning to his room, he had noticed that Kite was already up. Jerry was

currently making a valiant struggle from getting out from his bed. “Go wake up Belladonna.” Kite had asked.

Walking over, he pushed open the door only to see Belladonna hugging her pillow in her sleep. Arriving at her bed, Unluck began to shake her awake.

“Wha—” A sudden cry could be heard before a leg suddenly sent Unluck flying.

“Annoying! Let me sleep a little longer.”

Holding onto his sore stomach, Unluck crawled back to his own room. Staring at Kite, he said, “You go wake her up.”

“You couldn’t? Let me try then.” Without knowing what he was up for, Kite entered the neighboring room.

Expectantly, Unluck waited. Sure enough, a furious howl could be heard along with the sound of a weight falling to the ground. Kite could then be seen crawling into the room in the same manner Unluck had. With a furious eye, Kite glared at Unluck, “You set me up!!!”

“I’ll head out first. I’ll leave the other two to you.” Unluck lifted his luggage and scrambled out the door.

Dragging his luggage with him, Unluck began to reflect on what his master had told him yesterday. Perhaps his master would give him some direct advice before the examination, he wasn’t sure. After all, now that he knew that his master was a Magus, Unluck had an indescribable vote of confidence in Victor.

Time slowly went by as people began to gather. But his teacher was still nowhere to be seen. The faith Unluck had in him had begun to shake once more.

“Ah, you came here so early I see.” Late to the party, Victor didn’t seem to look embarrassed at all.

“Didn’t you have something you wanted to say?” Unluck asked.

“Ah. That’s right. I have something good to give you.” Victor’s hand reached into his bosom and began to grope around. Unluck’s friends had started to gather close, hoping to see just what high-grade equipment a Magus would give to his disciple. Their own masters had carefully selected the very best items for their disciples to use after all.

Then, Victor pulled out a foot long stick from his clothes. “I’ll give you this. When you need to make a decision, this will come in handy.” With that, he patted Unluck’s shoulder and then ruffled his hair, “I wish you luck, my student.”

“No way!”

“Even the stingy has their limits!”

“Poor Unluck!”

“It’s good that my master isn’t him!”

“That Victor never changes! And here I thought he would have something good!”

“How ruthless, to actually give out toys like this!”

Everyone had all sorts of thoughts, but their faces had all the same expression of shock and pure sympathy for Unluck.

Unluck looked at the God’s Stick in his hands. Yes, “God’s Stick”. His mind had gone blank. A God’s Stick was for travelers who had lost their way to use in order to determine what direction to go in. Unless they were at the end of the line, they wouldn’t ever use one though. According to statistics, a God’s Stick had only a 60% chance of working, making it a slightly better approach than praying to god. For that reason, people had given this item a graceful name of the “God’s Stick”.

Seeing the leisurely unhelpful mage in front of them, Unluck and the other people around him began to give their most appropriate evaluation of the –”God’s Stick”.

“By my announcement, the examination will start!” Director general Collins was the first to retrieve his thoughts, “This time the goal will be Norman Laboratory in the middle of the Forest of Illusions.”

“Come now, wasn’t the original examination grounds to be Chichen Islands?” Bellissa asked.

“The level of the examinees this year is quite high. Furthermore, I have confidence in my disciple. For that, I changed the testing grounds for this year.” Collins explained.

“Belladonna, we’ll take the exams next year!” Bellissa was baffled as she spoke out to her student, “The Forest of Illusions is too dangerous.”

“No, I’ll take it. I have faith in my own strength.” Belladonna said.

“Don’t be stubborn, a trip to the Forest of Illusion is something that a Middle Mage needs to be approved for first. “ Mage Pierrot spoke up kindly.

“Why?” The four students asked.

The mage Collins then stood up, “Allow me to answer that.”

Stopping for a moment, he spoke, “You should know by now what happened 37,000 years ago. The Great War between demons and gods. The war continued for a few thousand years before a great decisive battle was finally fought between the both of them. After this battle, the demon race was thoroughly defeated. That battle soon came to be known as the Glorious Battle.”

“Everyone knows that of course. Of the three major holidays, Day of Thanks, Day of Glory, and Day of Victory, isn’t the Day of Glory the day we celebrate that battle? Is there anyone that doesn’t know about it?” Belladonna asked.

“But what you didn’t know is that the battlefield that the Glorious Battle took place in was the Forest of Illusions.” The mage Collins said.

“Really? Why don’t we know about that?” The originally most polite of the group, Kite, had finally interrupted his most esteemed master’s words. To be able to see the ancient battlefield where the Glorious Battle took place, it was something that had a great attraction to a descendant of Knights like he.

“That is because despite the victory the gods had over the demons and the extermination of most of the stronger monsters, many of the inferior monsters managed to escape. Slipping into the otherworldly space in the Forest of Illusions, they spent many tens of thousands of year of assimilation. With the magical nature the beasts of the forests combined with the otherworldly monsters, the Forest of Illusion is a place of nightmares that not many people dare venture into.”

“Then, then why did the Mage Association situate a laboratory in the middle of that place?” Belladonna asked another question.

“The Mage Association would do no such thing.” Bellissa explained. “The laboratory was established by a mad mage by himself.”

“Wow, who was this great mage?” Everyone had asked in awe.

“Trainee Mage Crazy.” Bellissa had answered unwillingly.

“Trainee Mage?” It seemed that shocks to the hearts were coming one after another in the past two days.

Collins spoke, “You’d do well to not scorn the mage Crazy. Her strength isn’t beneath any of the six Magisters of the continent. By the age of 12, she had gained the title of Magus and as well as being the youngest Mage in history.”

“Then why do you say she’s a Trainee Mage?” Belladonna asked.

“Oh! That was because she had studied the forbidden magicks, embezzled the materials of the Mage Association, destroyed public property, abducted young mages to act as guinea pigs, injured many more, and many other evil misconducts that she was stripped of her honor and titles. Dropping down to the rank of Trainee Mage, she was also labeled “One of the Mage Association’s Greatest Five Humiliations.” Bellissa explained.

“So, you should think it over if you wish to participate or not.”

“We do!!” The four youngsters had completely ignored Bellissa’s warning and replied in unison.

Each of the four youngsters harbored a different thought about how they had officially started their endless journey to become a mage.

Kite was because of his admiration for the ancient Glorious Battle. Unluck thought about having the assistance of a strong Magus. Belladonna had purely wished to see the Magus her aunt had detested bitterly. Jerry simply just wanted to have fun.
